



Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

After nearly five years, I am leaving the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education. I have learned so much from my incredible colleagues at the State Board, charter schools and DCPS schools, advocacy partners, education organizations, and students and families. With my colleagues, we were able to re-establish an office that supported thousands of families, the majority of which represent the most disenfranchised in our city, particularly in Wards 5, 7, and 8. Through the office, we have demonstrated that establishing trust and ensuring confidentiality between schools and families can result in positive outcomes for students.

In the Office of the Ombudsman, we addressed issues that were brought to our attention by providing direct intervention; we also addressed these same issues on the systemic level through our engagement with local, state, and national education leaders. Our office became a venue for parents, students, and families to have a real voice in addressing systemic inequities that are causing our children, particularly children of color, to fail. We implemented a dispute resolution system with the vision that educational equity extends beyond formal equality and promotes a barrier free system in which students have the opportunity to benefit fully from their public school systems.

Our office's work has been recognized nationally, and our recommendations have been implemented locally. Over the years, as the Education Ombudsman, I have observed positive changes in this city, and though a number of challenges remain, these changes indicate that disruption of inequitable systems is not only possible, it's starting to happen every day.

I look forward to my new role as the DC Regional Director of Rocketship Public Schools as it gives me an opportunity to continue the important work of advancing educational equity by taking lessons learned through thousands of interactions with schools and families to promoting the growth of quality schools in Washington, DC.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as the second Education Ombudsman in DC.

Warmly,

Joyanna

Outgoing Ombudsman for Public Education

Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education  
DC State Board of Education  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 723N, Washington, DC 20001  
[www.sboe.dc.gov/ombudsman](http://www.sboe.dc.gov/ombudsman)